

House Resolution

No. 23

Introduced by Assembly Member Bradford

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August 8, 2013

House Resolution No. 23—Relative to youth.

- 1 WHEREAS, The criminalization of African American, Latino,
2 and Asian and Pacific Islander youth continues to pervade our
3 social, educational, political, and cultural systems; and
4 WHEREAS, Boys and men of color throughout California
5 continue to face unnecessary hurdles in education, in opportunities
6 to work, in public safety, and in other areas based on preconceived
7 notions and fear; and
8 WHEREAS, The verdict in the case against George Zimmerman
9 for the killing of Trayvon Martin was deeply troubling to many
10 young people and to Californians in general. Many have interpreted
11 the ruling to signify that there are two separate but unequal justice
12 systems for whites and nonwhites, that fearing a black and brown

1 youth can justify the taking of a life, and that simply walking down
2 the street or wearing certain clothes is viewed as criminal; and

3 WHEREAS, California's boys and men of color face unique
4 barriers on their road to adulthood. They are more likely to grow
5 up in neighborhoods marked by poverty, violence, underfunded
6 schools, and low-wage jobs; and

7 WHEREAS, In California, 35 percent of African American
8 youth and 26 percent of Latino youth do not graduate from high
9 school; and

10 WHEREAS, Young African American men experience homicide
11 rates at least 16 times greater than that of young white men; and

12 WHEREAS, Racial profiling continues to exist throughout this
13 state, and our young people deserve better; and

14 WHEREAS, It is essential that all Californians examine their
15 prejudices and biases so that we can work toward a world in which
16 all people are judged by the content of their character and their
17 actions, and not by the color of their skin; and

18 WHEREAS, All lives are valuable, and none are disposable;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, All people, regardless of the color of their skin,
21 should be able to enjoy the basic liberty that many of us take for
22 granted, including the freedom to walk down the street; and

23 WHEREAS, Laws like Florida's Stand Your Ground law risk
24 escalating minor confrontations with tragic results. We need to
25 find ways to defuse conflicts, and not escalate them; and

26 WHEREAS, The best way to honor the memory of Trayvon
27 Martin is to channel our pain and frustration into our work to create
28 an inclusive California in which our communities need not fear
29 our sons and brothers walking down the street; and

30 WHEREAS, Trayvon Martin's death is not in vain. The tragedy
31 is a catalyst to create a California that embraces and invests in the
32 health and well-being of all young people. They are a source of
33 strength, creativity, and economic dynamism, and not a group that
34 should be feared or condemned. California's diversity is its greatest
35 strength and a competitive advantage; and

36 WHEREAS, The Legislature is taking action through legislation,
37 budget decisions, and through the Legislative oversight function
38 to ensure that the needs of California's boys and men of color are
39 a priority in state investments and programs; and

1 WHEREAS, The Assembly has established the Select
2 Committee on the Status of Boys and Men of Color to help put
3 our young people on a road to a healthy and successful adulthood
4 because successful young people are not born, they are nurtured;
5 now, therefore, be it

6 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California*, That the
7 Assembly encourages the Select Committee on the Status of Boys
8 and Men of Color to continue to advance its legislative agenda to
9 improve the lives of young people of color, including its work to
10 reduce the use of policies and practices that push boys out of school
11 and to instead promote common sense discipline that keeps pupils
12 in school and on track; and be it further

13 *Resolved*, That the Assembly encourages the Select Committee
14 on the Status of Boys and Men of Color to deepen its commitment
15 to prepare young men of color for success in the workplace and
16 in the marketplace and to increase the numbers of young men of
17 color who are prepared for jobs and professional careers in the
18 health, education, and green infrastructure sectors; and be it further

19 *Resolved*, That the Assembly further encourages the Select
20 Committee on the Status of Boys and Men of Color to support
21 growing state and national efforts to shine a spotlight on the needs
22 and aspirations of young men of color across the United States,
23 including the newly formed Congressional Caucus on Black Men
24 and Boys; and be it further

25 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
26 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.